

SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Part B

Background

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has identified eight "Cluster Areas" as being those areas of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that have the greatest potential for impacting the outcomes for infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities. The eight cluster areas covering both Parts C and Part B form the basis for the OSEP Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process (CIMP). As part of the monitoring process, OSEP required states to conduct a self-assessment on these cluster areas using committees of stakeholders. The self-assessment information that is developed through this process will be used by OSEP to design their monitoring of the state.

To prepare for this required activity in the spring of 2001, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) Division of Special Education prepared committee assignments around the cluster area topics and engaged both the State Interagency Coordination Council (SICC) for Part C and the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) for Part B in conversation and commitment to this process.

In addition to the five cluster areas identified by OSEP for Part B, Missouri chose to take an in-depth look at the Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) program and treated it as an additional cluster.

Cluster Areas for Part B

- General Supervision
- Parent Involvement
- Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
- Secondary Transition
- Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)
- Early Childhood Transition

Committee Responsibilities

DESE appointed committees by April 1, 2001. Committees began their work the week of May 14th. All cluster area committee members participated in an Orientation to the Improvement Process, Orientation to Data Analysis, and had an opportunity to meet with their committees to establish future meeting dates and work scope.

Each cluster committee was responsible for responding to the questions that had been outlined for their work and review preliminary data gathered by DESE staff. Committees were encouraged to suggest, obtain and review other data sources that may be available. The data sources that were listed were not all inclusive. Some data sources provided current information; others failed to contain the information that the committee believed was needed. Committees suggested new or modified data sources as part of their findings.

Each cluster committee was responsible for submitting a written report by September 30, 2001, to DESE that included the following three components:

1. **Committee Findings:** This section summarized the findings of the committee which "painted a picture" of the current status of the cluster area in the state. The findings had to be supported with the identification of the activities and/or data used by the committee in making its findings. The committee also reported on barriers and/or challenges that were identified in their study of the area.

2. **Analysis of Findings:** This section of the report identified, as appropriate, positive findings related to the cluster area (what is going well) and provided any specific recommendations for improvement strategies for the cluster area.
3. **Identify Data Gaps:** This section identified additional data needed to make a thorough analysis of the cluster area. Recommendations for obtaining the data included surveys, focus groups and querying other agencies.

June – September 2001 Cluster Meetings

- **OSEP Draft Indicators**
The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), which is a part of the U.S. Department of Education, issued revised draft indicators for the components of the cluster areas. During the June meeting, the committees reviewed the revised critical indicators for their cluster areas. The committees made recommendations from these drafts that the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) submitted to OSEP. In addition, the committee finalized the wording for each indicator that was used in the self-assessment process.
- **Cluster Committee Role and Report**
Staff from the Great Lakes Regional Resource Center (GLARRC) assisted with the design of the next phases of the Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process (CIMP). The role of the cluster committees was to do a data review by the end of September. Committees issued a preliminary data analysis (strengths and weaknesses for each component of the cluster areas) and made recommendations for the data that still needed to be collected (data gaps). The recommendations for additional data collection either validated or complemented the data that was analyzed by the committee. A final format of the preliminary report was provided at the July meeting so that committees could begin to develop the report.

October 2001 Cluster Committee Report to Panel

- In October 2001, representatives of the cluster committees presented their reports. Committees determined how the report would be presented to the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP), which was the steering committee for the Part B cluster areas.

November 2001-July 2002 Additional Data Gathering

- During the spring of 2002, DESE collected additional data as recommended by the subcommittees. At that time, DESE developed an unsuccessful grant application to OSEP to provide funds to assist the state in this process. DESE staff contacted outside agencies, collaborated with GLARRC on the development of surveys and focus groups, and contracted with Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis (OSED) to conduct parent and student surveys.

After additional data was collected to validate the cluster committees' preliminary findings or to fill in the "data gaps" that the committees identified, the cluster committees reconvened in July 2002 to write a final report for each cluster area.

October 2002 Adoption of Self-Assessment Report

- The SEAP and DESE met to review the final report in October 2002. At that time, the SEAP engaged in a "Cross-Cluster Analysis" which resulted in the identification of systemic findings and developed recommendations for systemic improvements for both compliance issues and improved results for children with disabilities in our state.

Timeline for the Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process (CIMP) For Special Education Service Delivery in Missouri Part B

Activity	Dates	Participants	Objectives	Outcomes
Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Self-Assessment conference	July 18-19, 2000 Chicago	State Advisory Panel and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) staff	Gain knowledge of self-assessment process from OSEP and states that have completed the process.	Developed understanding of the value of the process
Internal meetings to discuss the process	August-October 2000	DESE staff	In-service DESE staff and discuss options since Missouri is not required to go through until 2002-03.	Made the decision to initiate process early to allow ample time for completion of a quality self-assessment
Design and planning of Missouri Self-Assessment Process	October 2000 – April 2001	State Advisory Panel and DESE staff	Design the process to address Missouri concerns.	Designed the self-assessment process; added Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) cluster for Missouri needs; developed format and data presentation for orientation session
Data Collection/Preliminary Data Analysis	May-September 2001 May 15-16 June 12-13 July 13-14 August 6-7 September 10-11	Cluster Committees, State Advisory Panel and DESE staff	Study self-assessment clusters, develop/review indicators for each component, suggest data sources necessary to analyze indicators, inventory data available, suggest data that still needs to be collected, start data analysis (strengths and weaknesses under each component.) These data requests may include surveys, focus groups, other secondary data collection (i.e., data from other agencies), etc.	Issued preliminary data analysis (strengths and weaknesses for each component), issued recommendations for data still needing to be collected that will either validate or complement available data analysis. Indicated new data that has not been available to the subcommittee. Issued preliminary report for Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) and DESE review.
Presentation on Available Data and Recommendations for Further Data Collection (validation and complementation)	October 2001	State Advisory Panel, Subcommittees (or representatives) and DESE staff	Presentations by cluster committee members on recommendations for additional data collection for filling data gaps and exploring data validation needs.	Inventory of data still required for complete cluster analysis, including data for validation of preliminary findings.
Meet with Great Lakes Area Regional Resource Center (GLARRC) to discuss data collection for Data Gaps	December 2001	GLARRC and DESE staff	Identify strategies for obtaining information listed under data gaps and prioritize options.	Developed preliminary plan to collect additional data for subcommittees

Activity	Dates	Participants	Objectives	Outcomes
Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) meeting	January 2002	State Advisory Panel and Subcommittees (or representatives)	Discussion and review of Cluster Reports, Data Gaps and plan to collect additional data.	Reviewed data gaps
Additional Data Collection (Validation and complementation)	October 2001 – May 2002	DESE staff, GLARRC, OSEDA	Collect recommended data that includes the design and implementation of surveys, focus groups, and plan/design data systems for continued analysis (if necessary.)	Presentation to subcommittees and advisory panel of requested data, summary of results of data collected from surveys, focus groups, etc., presentation of data system modifications (if necessary)
SEAP Meeting	March 2002	State Advisory Panel, Subcommittees (or representatives) and DESE staff	Design a process to gather questionnaire and surveys	Agreed to use GLARRC for focus groups: Contract groups with OSEDA for parent and student surveys.
Meet with Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis (OSEDA) to develop surveys and Focus groups	March 18, 2002	DESE and OSEDA	Design a process to gather questionnaire and surveys	Developed draft surveys for review by SEAP committee
Surveys and Focus Groups	March-August 2002	DESE staff, GLARRC, OSEP, State Advisory Panel	Conduct parent phone survey. Conduct student mail survey. Conduct parent, student, ECSE administrators, and administrator's focus groups.	Written report of surveys. Written report of focus groups.
SEAP meeting	May 2002	State Advisory Panel and DESE staff	Update on status	Update
Data Analysis	July 2002	DESE staff, GLARRC	Complete data analysis (strengths and weaknesses) and data validation per cluster and component of self-assessment – using information developed during previous subcommittee meetings and the new data.	Write the findings (strengths and weaknesses) for each cluster and component of self-assessment. Present findings to State Advisory Panel.
Report Writing Design Team	July 2002	State Advisory Panel, DESE staff, GLARRC	Design a format for the final report	Outlined final report format and made writing assignments
SEAP Panel meeting	August 2002	State Advisory Panel, DESE staff	Debriefing on cluster committee meetings. Developed process for review and adoption of the final report.	Systemic analysis of findings, recommendations for systemic improvements (compliance and improved results). Reviewed process agreed upon.
Self-Assessment Writing and Review	June-September 2002	DESE staff	Write self-assessment draft, obtain self-assessment feedback, review self-assessment	Draft copy of self-assessment for final approval by SEAP.
Final Report Development	October 2002	State Advisory Panel, DESE staff, GLARRC	Adoption of the final report	Final self-assessment report due to OSEP October 18, 2002.

Continuing Improvement Monitoring Process (CIMP) Cluster Committee Meetings Part B

Date	Tasks	Strategies	Products
May 15-16, 2001 Cluster Committee Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing and clarifying indicators (components/clusters) • Discussing assumptions and implications • Determining if sufficient data is provided or if there are other data sources available • Beginning analysis of existing data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole group discussion • Small groups (dyads/triads) discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lists of assumptions, questions and concerns • Lists additional sources of data
June 13-14, 2001 Cluster Committee Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing and clarifying the revised indicators (components/clusters) from OSEP • Reviewing and analyzing existing data, identifying additional data sources, proposing data collection improvements • Determining if sufficient data is provided or if there are other data sources available • Analyzing data and determining results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical analysis of data • Whole group and small group discussions • Participant facilitation and reporting out • Brainstorming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of indicators for cluster area • Lists of assumptions, questions and concerns • Lists of additional sources of data • Proposals of data collection needs (gaps) and/or improvements
July 18-19, 2001 Cluster Committee Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing and clarifying of indicators (components/clusters) • Reviewing and analyzing existing data, identifying additional data sources, proposing data collection improvements • Determining if sufficient data is provided or if there are other data sources available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole group and small group discussions • Generating and focusing, participant facilitation and reporting out • Critical and creative thinking • Converging ideas • Describing the big picture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification of assumptions questions and concerns • Identification of themes within each cluster • List of data gaps for the cluster area. • List of recommendations for improvements in data collection
August 6-7, 2001 Cluster Committee Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporating new data in the component review • Determining validation of data analysis conclusions • Combining and condensing improvement strategies • Organizing strategies in systems framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole group and small group discussions • Brainstorming, generating and focusing ideas and reporting out to large group • Critical and creative thinking • Converging ideas • Describing the big picture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesized list of strategies for major themes • List of maintenance and improvement strategies • Identification of themes across clusters
July 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporating new data requested into reports • Revising conclusions • Identifying conclusions for components 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole group/small group discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised cluster area report • Conclusions for components • Strengths • Concerns • Additional comments

SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Part C

Background

In July 1998, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) contracted with Solutions to conduct a thorough study of the current First Steps system and provide recommendations for system redesign. Solutions worked extensively with a Redesign Task Force made up of the State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) and Missouri Stakeholders to gather public input, conduct surveys and meet with state agencies including the Departments of Health and Senior Services, Mental Health, and Social Services. The final report was issued in September 1999. As a result, forty-five major recommendations were agreed upon to redesign the First Steps System in Missouri. The major components adopted included:

- **Establishment of a Central Finance Office (CFO) and Centralized Data System**
The Central Finance Office (CFO) manages the receipt/recovery of funds and payment of provider bills for early intervention services, and monitors provider enrollment and credentialing. A common CFO enrollment form enables providers to become vendors for multiple programs. The single data system provides required data for federal reports and fiscal and program planning and management. Common documents including the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) were developed and are required system-wide. These forms support First Steps processes, eliminate duplication, are coordinated with other agency programs and services, and are all linked to the single data system.

- **System Point of Entry (SPOE)**
A System Point of Entry (SPOE) designated by individual counties or a cluster of counties performs initial intake and eligibility determination, and all data collection functions. SPOEs are funded through contracts with DESE. Twenty-five SPOEs are expected at full implementation of the Redesign.

SPOEs may not be providers of early intervention services but may be providers of ongoing service coordination. SPOEs are responsible for all data entry for initial, annual, and updated IFSPs for their service area. SPOE staff must attend training and be credentialed as required by their contracts with DESE.

- **Service Providers**
All providers of early intervention services including independent service coordination must be credentialed, be Medicaid providers, and enroll in the CFO in order to receive authorizations and payment for provision of early intervention services.
- **Comprehensive System of Personnel Development**
The Redesign recommendations included the development of standardized training modules that would be required for all providers of Part C services in the state. Training is provided regionally by credentialed trainers who have met standards set by the state. Exit exams are required for each module. Training modules that have been developed and implemented include:
 - Orientation to First Steps—this covers the philosophy and intent of Part C services, federal and state rules and the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) process.
 - Evaluation and Assessment—this covers required steps in evaluation to determine eligibility and assessment for ongoing IFSP programming. Effective practices for assessment of very young children, selection of instruments to meet individual needs, and report writing are presented.
 - IFSP Outcomes and Intervention in Natural Environments—this covers effective practices in developing functional outcomes and embedding early intervention services in the daily routine of families' lives.

- Transitions—this covers effective planning for transition into, within, and out of First Steps for families and children.
- Service Coordination—this covers the role and responsibilities of intake and ongoing service coordinators.
- System Point of Entry (SPOE) Training—this covers all responsibilities of the SPOE staff including intake, eligibility determination, and data entry for all Part C functions including IFSP data for eligible infants and toddlers.

Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process (CIMP)

In July 2000, when Missouri began working on the Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process (CIMP), Division staff and the State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) agreed that a significant amount of self-assessment data had been gathered via the redesign efforts of the state. The state had also begun the implementation of the major components. A joint decision was made to incorporate the data from the Redesign effort and begin to add in appropriate child data from the new system.

The contract for the Central Finance Office (CFO) was awarded and Phase I SPOEs began operation in April 2002. During the spring 2002 Legislative session, the state began experiencing revenue shortfalls. Budget reductions were ordered for all state agencies for 2002 and will be continued into 2003. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Department of Mental Health (DMH), and the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) were all affected by budget reductions with the other two agencies (DMH and DHSS) hit with staff reductions. A \$700,000 reduction was required by the state legislature to the DESE First Steps supplemental budget request. DESE made the decision to continue direct services to infants, toddlers, and families and focus budget reductions at administrative functions, Local Interagency Coordinating Councils (LICCs) and training. Instead of phasing in various regions of the state during the fall of 2002, the decision was made to implement the Redesign in the remaining areas of the state in February 2003.

The SICC has been actively involved with the implementation of the new First Steps system. Data from the new system is still somewhat unreliable. SPOEs have been entering data since April 2002. DESE began reviewing data for accuracy and have been working with SPOEs to improve the accuracy and validity of the data.

Implementation

In January 2002 the contract for the CFO and five SPOEs were awarded. This began the Phase I implementation in eighteen counties. Eligible infants and toddlers were converted from the old system to the new data system through a series of conversion activities between DMH, DHSS and the designated SPOEs. Beginning on April 1, 2002, all First Steps services are being provided to eligible infants and toddlers in these eighteen counties through the five SPOEs in Phase I.

Missouri currently has a Request for Proposal (RFP) available for the remaining areas of the state. The closing date for bids is September 17, 2002. It is anticipated that the remaining areas will be awarded by November 1, 2002 with a startup date of February 2003.

Timeline for the Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process For Special Education Service Delivery in Missouri Part C

Activity	Dates	Participants	Objectives	Outcomes
Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Self-Assessment Conference	July 18-19, 2000 Chicago	Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education staff (DESE)	Gain knowledge of self-assessment process from OSEP and states that have completed the process.	Developed understanding of the value of the process
Internal meetings to discuss the process	August-October 2000	DESE staff	In-service DESE staff and discuss options since Missouri is not required to go through the self-assessment until 2002-2003.	Decision to try to use Redesign data as much as possible in the process.
Design and planning of Missouri Self-Assessment Process	October 2000 – April 2001	State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) and DESE staff	Design the process to address Missouri concerns and make decision to begin process early in order to conduct a more thorough review of data.	Designed the self-assessment process using data from Redesign efforts.
Data Collection/ Preliminary Data Analysis	May-September 2001	DESE staff	Study self-assessment clusters, develop/review indicators for each component, suggest data sources necessary to analyze indicators, inventory data available, suggest data that still needs to be collected, start data analysis (strengths and weaknesses under each component based on Redesign data).	Issued preliminary data analysis (strengths and weaknesses for each component), issued recommendations for data still needed to collected that will either: validate or complement available data analysis. Also, indicated new data that has not been made available to the subcommittee. These data requests may include surveys, focus groups, other secondary data collection (i.e., data from other agencies)
Establish performance objectives for Part C system	November 2001	SICC, DESE staff, Great Lakes Area Regional Resource Center (GLARRC)	Review Part B performance goals, Redesign, and OSEP clusters and indicators.	Developed performance indicators for Part C.
Presentation on available data and recommendations for further data collection (validation and complementation)	January 2002	SICC, Subcommittees (or representatives) and DESE staff	Presentations of subcommittee members on recommendations for additional data collection for: filling data gaps, and exploring data validation needs.	Inventoried data still required for completion cluster analysis, including data for validation of preliminary findings.
Meet with GLARRC to discuss data collection for Data Gaps	December 2001	GLARRC and DESE staff	Identify strategies for obtaining information listed under Data Gaps; prioritize options	Developed preliminary plan to collect additional data.

Activity	Dates	Participants	Objectives	Outcomes
Additional Data Collection (Validation and complementation)	October 2001 – July 2002	Missouri State Agency Data Team	Collect recommended data which includes the design and implementation of surveys, focus groups, and plan/design data systems for continued analysis (if necessary)	Presentation to subcommittee and State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) advisory panel of requested data, summary of results of data collected.
State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) Meeting	March 2002	SICC and Subcommittees (or representatives)	Review Cluster area reports Conference call with Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)	Updated and revised reports
SICC Meeting	July 2002	SICC and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) staff	Review cluster area reports	Updated
Data Analysis	July 2002	Subcommittee, Missouri State Agency Data Team	Complete data analysis (strengths and weaknesses) and data validation per cluster and component of self-assessment – using information developed during previous subcommittee meetings and the new data	Wrote up the findings (strengths and weaknesses) for each cluster and component of self-assessment. Presented findings to State Advisory Panel
Report Writing Design Team	July 2002	Three Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) members, DESE staff, Great Lakes Area Regional Resource Center (GLARRC)	Design a format for the final report	Outlined final report format and made writing assignments
SICC meeting	July 2002	SICC and DESE staff	Debriefing on cluster committee meeting	Completed systemic analysis of findings, recommendations for systemic improvement s (compliance and improved results).
SICC meeting	September 2002	SICC and DESE staff	Debriefing on cluster committee meeting	Completed systemic analysis of findings, recommendations for systemic improvements (Compliance and improved results).
Self-Assessment Writing and Review	June-September 2002	DESE staff	Write self-assessment draft, obtain self-assessment feedback, review self-assessment	Draft copy of self-assessment for final approval by the SICC.
Final Report Development	October 2002	SICC and DESE staff	Adoption of the final report	Final Self-Assessment Report due to OSEP October 18, 2002.